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Ministry of Forests and Range

CHESLATTA CARRIER ISSUED LONG-TERM FOREST AGREEMENT

BURNS LAKE – The Province has issued a long-term community forest agreement to the Cheslatta Carrier First Nation so it can continue building on its forestry successes of the past five years, announced Dennis MacKAY, MLA for Bulkley Valley-Stikine.

"Our goal for every community forest is that they create benefits and new opportunities for the entire community – and that's exactly what has happened here on the Southside," said MacKAY. "This new agreement provides the Cheslatta Carrier First Nation with long-term certainty and the ability to plan forestry operations up until 2032."

The licence is for a term of 25 years and allows the harvest of 16,313 cubic metres of timber per year within the Lakes timber supply area. Currently, the licence also carries a temporary additional allocation of 200,000 cubic metres a year to harvest timber attacked by the mountain pine beetle.

"The community forest has played a big role in our local and regional economic development strategy by creating skilled jobs and training opportunities," said Cheslatta Carrier Nation Chief Corrina Leween. "It has also allowed us to fund many community projects, including a community bus, a public dock on Francois Lake and the hot lunch program at the Grassy Plains School."

Since receiving an initial five-year community forest agreement in 2002, the Cheslatta Carrier First Nation has harvested about one million cubic metres of timber. Most of the timber was processed at the Cheslatta Forest Products sawmill at nearby Ootsa Lake, jointly owned by the Cheslatta Carrier Nation (Nootsenay Enterprises Ltd.), local residents (Ootsa Resources Ltd.) and Carrier Forest Products Ltd.

The sawmill employs 140 people, has invigorated the local economy and encouraged youth to seek higher education and training in forestry trades. The Cheslatta Carrier Nation promotes the use of local businesses and contractors in its operations.

Community forest agreements are a form of legal tenure by which the Province transfers decision-making to communities that wish to more fully participate in the stewardship of local forest resources. Community forest tenures are area-based, and give communities exclusive rights to harvest timber within the area of the licence.

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